

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable consideration of this application, as presently amended, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3 are pending in this application. Claims 1-3 have been amended to clarify the present invention without the introduction of any new matter as more fully discussed below.

The outstanding Office Action presents a rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kinba et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,597,999, Kinba) in view of Serizawa et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,593,970, Serizawa), a rejection of Claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kinba in view of Beutter et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,533,721, Beutter), and a rejection of Claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kinba in view of Malkin et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,614,474, Malkin).

As described relative to amended Claim 1, a digital camera comprises a system control unit (21) having a first level conversion characteristic in which a predetermined gain setting value is set and a second level conversion characteristic in which a gain setting value larger than the gain setting value of the first level conversion characteristic is set. See page 4, lines 15-20, for example. The system control unit (21) sends the first level conversion characteristic to the edge enhancement processing device (20) when the first focusing system is selected to be independently operative by the selection device (17), or the first and the second focusing systems are selected to be operative together by the selection device (17), and sends the second level conversion characteristic to the edge enhancement processing device (20) when the second focusing system is selected to be independently operative by the selection device (17), so that the edge component is emphasized.

According to amended Claim 1, when the second focusing system which is a range finding sensor system for detecting a focused position by means of the range finding sensor (5)

is selected, the system control unit (21) sends the second level conversion characteristic in which the gain setting value larger than the gain setting value of the first level conversion characteristic is set to the edge enhancement processing device (20). Thereby, the edge components of the image signals of the image photographed at the focused position obtained by using the second focusing system are enhanced, and the photographed image having an improved resolution can be obtained even if the second focusing system in which the focusing accuracy is relatively lower as compared with the first focusing system is selected.

Therefore, according to amended Claim 1, by using the second focusing system in which the detection speed of a focused position is faster than that in the first focusing system, a photographed image having an improved resolution can be obtained while shortening the release time-lag.

Moreover, as described in amended Claim 2, a digital camera comprises a system control unit (21) having a first level conversion characteristic in which a predetermined limit setting value is set and a second level conversion characteristic in which a limit setting value larger than the limit setting value of the first level conversion characteristic is set, wherein the system control unit (2) sends the first level conversion characteristic to the edge enhancement processing device (20) when the first focusing system is selected to be independently operative by the selection device (17), or the first and the second focusing systems are selected to be operative together by the selection device (17), and sends the second level conversion characteristic to the edge enhancement processing device (20) when the second focusing system is selected to be independently operative by the selection device (17), so that the edge component is emphasized.

Furthermore, as described in amended Claim 3, a digital camera comprises a system control unit (21) having a first level conversion characteristic in which a setting value of a digital filter is set and a second level conversion characteristic in which a setting value of the

digital filter having a characteristic which enhances a high frequency component than the setting value of the digital filter of the first level conversion characteristic is set, wherein the system control unit (21) sends the first level conversion characteristic to the edge enhancement processing device (20) when the first focusing system is selected to be operative independently by the selection device (17), or the first and second focusing systems are selected to be operative together by the selection device (17), and sends the second level conversion characteristic to the edge enhancement device (20) when the second focusing system is selected to be independently operative by the selection device (17), so that the edge component is emphasized.

According to the invention set forth in each of the amended Claims 2 and 3, similar to the invention set forth in the amended Claim 1, when the second focusing system, which is a range finding sensor system for detecting a focused position by the range finding sensor (5) is selected, the system control unit (21) sends the second level conversion characteristic in which the limit setting value larger than the limit setting value of the first level conversion characteristic is set, or sends the second level conversation characteristic in which the setting value of the digital filter having a characteristic which enhances a high frequency component than the setting value of the digital filter of the first level conversion characteristic is set to the edge enhancement processing device (20).

Thereby, the edge components of the image signals of the image photographed at the focused position obtained by using the second focusing system are enhanced and the photographed image having an improved resolution can be obtained even when the second focusing system in which the focusing accuracy is relatively lower as compared with the first focusing system is selected.

Therefore, according to the invention set forth in each of the amended Claims 2 and 3, similar to the invention set forth in the amended Claim 1, a photographed image having an

improved resolution can be obtained while shortening the release time lag by using the second focusing system in which the detection speed of a focused position is faster than that in the first focusing system.

On the other hand, in Kinba, an auto focus detecting device, which obtains a focused position by using both of the contrast detecting method and the phase-difference detecting method, is disclosed.

However, in the invention described in Kinba, since the accurate focused position is detected by using both of the contrast detecting method and the phase-difference detecting method, it takes a longer time to obtain the accurate focused position.

For this reason, in the invention described in Kinba, for example, when photographing a moving object, it can take too long to obtain the focused position. This is because in Kinba, the release time lag cannot be reduced as it can in the present invention.

In addition, Kinba, does not teach or suggest that the focused position is obtained only by the second focusing system, i.e., the range finding sensor system, and that the image photographed at the focused position is processed as described in the present invention.

Moreover, while each of Serizawa, Beutter, and Malkin, provide a process which enhances edge components of image signals of a photographed image, none of these cited references teach or suggest that such an edge enhancement process is used for a camera which obtains a focused position only by using a range finding sensor.

Furthermore, as Kinba does not describe the technique which obtains a focused position only by using the range finding sensor system, the detection speed of a focused position cannot be increased and also the resolution of the photographed image at the focused position by the range finding sensor cannot be improved even if the teachings of Serizawa, Beutter, and Malkin are somehow used to modify Kinba. Consequently, the specific effect of the present invention which improves the resolution of the photographed image while

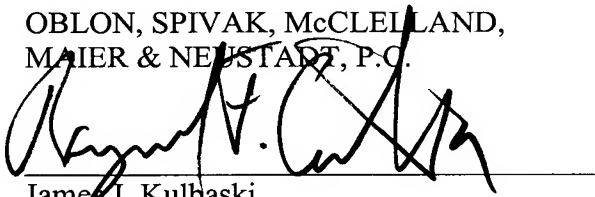
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reducing the release time-lag is not taught or suggested by the references relied on and provides an improvement over the cited prior art.

As no other issues are believed to remain outstanding relative to this application, it is believed to be clear that this application is in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable action to this effect is, therefore, respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James J. Kulbaski', is written over a horizontal line.

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